



**THE STRUGGLE TO ACHIEVE THE EROTIC LOVE IN
ROBERT BROWNING'S "MEETING AT NIGHT"**

A FINAL PROJECT

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for

Undergraduate Degree Majoring Literature in English Department

Faculty of Humanities Diponegoro University

**Submitted by
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2019**

PRONOUNCEMENT

The writer states truthfully that she compiles this study by herself and without taking the results from other research of any university, S-1, S-2, S-3 and diploma degree. In addition, the writer ascertains that he does not quote any material from other publications except for the references mentioned in bibliography.

Semarang, 17th August 2019

Femmy Rachmawati

APPROVAL

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MOTTO AND DEDICATION

Life is not determined by how long we live, but how useful we are to other people.

Sutopo Purwo Nugroho

Sekali berarti sudah itu mati

Chairil Anwar

*This paper is dedicated to
myself and my beloved mother and father,
and to everyone who helped me accomplished this paper.*

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I realize that this project is still far from perfect, I therefore, will be glad to receive any constructive criticism and recommendation to make this project better. Finally, I expect that project will be useful to the reader who wishes to learn something about the inner and the outer beauty that is reflected in the poem or other literary works.

Semarang, August 17th 2019

Femmy Rachmawati

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ABSTRACT

The study in the final project analyses Robert Browning's poem entitled "Meeting at Night". This poem is about a man who travels far away to come close to his lover. The purpose of this study is read through the poem of the intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. The methods used in this study is a library research. The intrinsic aspects denote the figurative language in the poem, which are imagery and symbol. Whereas the extrinsic aspects designate the struggle of the man to achieve the erotic love in the poem. The result of this study shows that only the one who falls in love who could feel the love and also love could make something beyond the logic of common people.

Keywords: Erotic Love, Robert Browning, The Struggle to Achieve Erotic Love, Figurative Language

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Love is a strong feeling from one person to another. It is hard to define what love really is. It could make one strong, but in the same time it could break them apart. She or he might believe that love is encouraging. It happens when she or he wants to be together to someone so dear and without them life will be incomplete. Then love has strength and weakness. Love is strong that could make them possibly to live through anything. Also it could be a weakness when he or she is scared on living without their lover or should live after the death separated them.

This study is concerned with the strong feeling in Robert Browning's "Meeting at Night". The poem is about a predetermined journey of a man who wants to meet his lover. The writer chose this poem because love is one of beautiful things that everybody ever feels, and this poem tells the readers the strong feeling. The main theory which will be used to explain the feeling in this study is Erich Fromm's concept of loving.

Furthermore, the emotion in the man is described discreetly through intrinsic and extrinsic aspects. The emotion that will be discussed is the strong feeling from one person to another. The strong feeling is also emotional development. The intrinsic aspects discussed are figurative language, such as imagery and symbol. Meanwhile, the extrinsic aspects discuss about the desire of love in this poem.

1.2 Research Question

Research Questions are as followed:

1. How is figurative language deployed to describe the emotional development?
2. How is the emotional development described through the concept of loving?

1.3 Objective of the Study

According to the research questions, the objectives of the study are:

1. To describe the emotional development through the figurative language in the poem.
2. To describe the emotional development through the concept of living.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Intrinsic Elements

2.1.1 Imagery

Perrine argued that, the figurative language that has the ability to reflect human senses through the use of language of sense experience and the image of the word is usually something that can be seen by the human eyes. Visual imagery is one kind of imagery that is frequently used in poetry. Image, is the depiction of imagery. The image itself could reflect sound, smell, taste, tactile experience, and internal sensation (1969:54). From the definition, then the writer's opinion about imagery is how the author uses words and phrases to depict the situation through the human senses of smell, sight, taste, touch, or hearing. While in this project, the writer only uses visual, kinesthetic, olfactory, auditory, and organic imagery.

2.1.2 Symbol

According to Perrine, a symbol may be roughly describes as something that has another meaning more than it is (1969:20). Also symbols vary in the degree of identification and definition that their authors give them (1969:21). From the definition, it could be concluded that symbols is the author's way to describe something with other words with deeper meaning.

2.2 Extrinsic Elements

In Wellek and Warren state that biography is about emotional development. These emotions have effects in relationship one to another (1942:67). The relationship between the poet and his lover makes him feels some emotions, from the sadness because they are separated by distance till the happiness when they are finally reunited.

Then, the question of "psychology" still remains within the works. We judge characters in literary works such as plays and novels to be "psychologically" true. We praise situation and accept plots because of this same quality. At times, a psychological theory, held either consciously or loosely by an author, seems to be the figure or a situation (1942:86). So what happens in the text is what happen in reality.

Then, Fromm mentions that sexual desires could be triggered by anxiety of loneliness. In this situation there is no other motif than love (1957:54). When someone is lonely he or she tends to want somebody present, especially the one they love. He or she wants to spend their day with him or her.

Fromm also mentions about erotic love. It is the craving to complete fusion, for become one with somebody (1957:52-53). In the poem, the poet's soul is craving for somebody. He is willing to sail the sea at night just to reunite with his love.

In erotic love there is an exclusiveness, when the two lovers need to be attached to each other (1957:55). In love relationship, there are only two persons. When two persons falling in love they will do anything just to be together.

Besides a strong feeling, another factor needed to love somebody is a promise (Fromm, 1957:56). In the poem, the poet and his lover make a promise to meet in the secret place at night.

2.3 Paraphrase

2.3.1 Free Verse of “Meeting at Night”

Following is the free verse of “Meeting at Night”:

The grey sea and the long black land/And the yellow half-moon large and low/And
the startled little waves that leap/In fiery ringlets from their sleep//
As I gain the cove with pushing prow/And quench its speed i' the slushy sand//
Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach/Three fields to cross till a farm appears//
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch/And blue spurt of a lighted match//
And a voice less loud, thro' its joys and fears/Than the two hearts beating each to
each!//

2.3.2 Prosaic Form

Following is the prosaic form of “Meeting at Night”:

Into the grey sea and the long black land I start the journey with the yellow moon
which is large and low. I leave the land heading to the cove. When I paddle the boat,
I woke the waves up and they are startled from their sleep.

Then I arrive at the cove and slow down the boat. It stopped in the slushy sand and
I leave the boat to continue my journey.

While I walk away from the cove, I could smell the warm sea-scented beach within
a mile distant. My journey is still far, I should pass three fields first till a farm
appears.

I make sign by tapping and scratching the window pane to let my lover know that I have finally arrived. Then, I lighted the match to make another sign.

I could not hold my longing to my lover, I am so happy to meet her and our heart beating faster than usual. But we should keep our voice low because we are afraid that somebody will find out about our secret meeting.

RESEARCH METHOD

3.1 Data Collection

This study uses library research to help the writer analyze the secret love in the poem. According to George, library research is “an investigation involving accepted facts, unknowns, speculation, logical procedures rigorously applied. Verification, evaluation, repetition and ultimately an interpretation of findings that extends understanding” (2008:22-23). From the definition above it could concluded that library research is a step used to gather information on one or several subjects to support the writing. In this aspect, the writer interprets the poetic lines in order to discuss the secret love.

The writer uses numerous source books related to support the arguments. Both printed and digital sources the writer read to collect credible and reliable information. The sources which the writer use, in this writing include Erich Fromm’s *Theory of Loving* (1957), Laurence Perrine’s *Sound and Sense* (1969), and Wellek and Warren’s *An Introduction To Poetry* (1973).

Based on the explanation above, the research will be done in several stages, namely the intrinsic aspects, and the extrinsic aspects. The writer uses all of these aspects to get a thorough understanding of the poem deeper.

DISCUSSION

4.1 Intrinsic Aspects

4.1.1 Imagery

4.1.1.1 Stanza 1

*The **grey** sea and the **long black** land;*

The first line uses visual imagery because the sea looks grey and the land looks long and black. Maybe it is not because the color of the sea which is grey instead of blue, and the land is described as black, not white, because the poet wants to tell that it is a nighttime and the land is long maybe because the land is far away.

*And the **yellow half-moon** large and low;*

The second line is also visual imagery that describes the condition of the moon that the moon's color is yellow and also it is not a full moon, but it is only half-moon large. This line also describes the position of moon which is low. Maybe it is sunset, or dawn.

*And the startled little waves that **leap***

This line can be argued as kinesthetic imagery as the poet provides the reader the capture of the waves. One could see not only the shape of the waves but also the movement. The word 'leap' very much represents the excitement of the poet himself to meet his secret lover.

*And **quench** its speed i' the slushy sand*

In this particular line, it could be argued as kinesthetic imagery since every reader could see how the poet provides them with the movement of his boat. It is known as the man slows down the boat, then when he changes the speed of the boat, and even the texture of the sand where his boat lands.

4.1.1.2 Stanza 2

*Then a mile of warm **sea-scented** beach*

This is olfactory imagery because when the poet walks away from the cove, he still could smell the scent of the beach, although the poet is now a mile away.

*A **tap** at the pane, **the quick sharp** scratch*

This line is could be defined as both kinestheticimagery and auditory imagery because when the poet finally arrives to his destination, he starts to make signs to his lover by tapping and scratching the window pane. By the sign, his lover will hear the tapping and he scratching by the man.

*And **blue spurt** of a lighted match*

This is another sign of the poet's arrival, it also categorized as visual imagery because one can see this sign by the blue color of the spurt.

*And a **voice less loud**, thro' its joys and fears*

This line is categorized as auditory imagery because it relates to sound of the couple that less loud when they meet. One could directly conclude that they are not

supposed to meet in the first place because if they were, they should not need to lower their voices. Also this line has another imagery which is organic imagery showed by the couple's feel when they are finally reunited.

*Than the two hearts **beating** each to each!*

This line could be said as kinesthetic since it represents the two of them are having missionary sexual intercourse. It is known as a traditional position where the man is in the top of the woman.

4.1.2 Symbols

4.1.2.1 Stanza 1

'The gray sea and the long black land;

In this line, the color of the sea and the land become gray and black because it is dark outside. The poet wants to tell the reader that it is a nighttime. Also the sea could be defined as the separating force between the two lovers who want to meet each other. The sea separates the lovers in geography, but the poet still could meet his lover despite the great distance.

And the yellow half-moon large and low:

In this line, the speaker refers to the color and the location of the moon. Then, it is another hint that it is a night time. The moon's position which is "low" could mean that it is either early in the evening, or close to morning because the moon rises and sets just like the sun. Moreover, the "half-moon" with "yellow" as its color is a symbol of warm atmosphere. The yellow moon will nourish a sense of warmth and hope in the background of grey sea and black land, standing for the

smoothness of the poet in the journey of love. The “large and low” refers to a comfortable or peaceful situation.

4.1.2.2 Stanza 2

Three fields to cross till a farm appears

This line tells all the long journey that the poet had, by gaining a cove, passing a beach, and crossing three fields until a farm appears could be defined as sacrifice of love. It is because the man willingly passes through three fields in the midnight just to meet his lover. The reason why the speaker chooses the words “three fields” because he wants to show that the journey is very far. It shows a sacrifice against love.

And blue spurt of a lighted match,

The poet describes a "lighted match," which refers to dark or nighttime. It is also a sign for his lover that the man arrives and the lighting of the match is a symbol of romantic passion of the couple.

4.2 Extrinsic Aspects

4.2.1 The Struggle to Achieve the Erotic Love

The first stanza line 1 describes about the situation before the man sails. It portraits that the color of the sea looks grey and the land looks black. This dark color not only means that it is a nighttime but also reflects the man's sadness because his lover and him are separated by long distance. Then the next line, the poet describes the moon with yellow color that indicates warmth in the background of the grey sea

and the long black land. Also yellow color shows about peace situation, energy, and happiness. From lines 1 and 2, it could be concluded that the poet feels sad because he and his lover is separated by distance but there is still a chance to meet his lover by sailing far by himself at night. The reason why he is sailing at the night is because he does not want his leaving to be known by other people since a nighttime is usually a time for bed. He does this because his relationship with his lover is in secret.

Lines 3 and 4 describe about the waves. It is known that waves are created by energy passing through water, causing it to move in a circular motion. So, the energy to make the waves could be described as the strong desire of the poet to meet his lover. Moreover, the waves that leap in that the poet mentions could be interpreted as the excitement to finally meet with his lover. Also the sea could be described as the life's problem. In this poem the sea could be defined as the separating force between two lovers who want to meet each other.

The second stanza, it tells that the man who just passes half of his journey. He finally arrives at the cove and continue his journey by walking and leaving the boat. He should pass three fields first before he arrives to his destination which is none other than the farm. As said in the symbol, the word "three fields" means that his journey is very far. In line 3 when he arrives to the farm, he starts making a sign to his lover of his arrival by tapping and scratching the windowpane. He also makes another sign by lighting a match that can be seen in line 4. The reason why they use a sign because they both are afraid that their secret meeting is known by someone else.

Line 5 tells that two lovers finally meet each other and they should keep the voice low. Then they speak in lower voice so that nobody could not hear what they say. Although they feel afraid about their meeting, they feel very happy because they finally meet someone that they missed and loved. Furthermore, the man feels happy because all the sacrifices that he made is paid. Then, in the line 6, the two lovers are so excited about the meeting and start doing things lovers usually do. The word “beating each to each” shows the traditional position of sexual intercourse that is known as missionary position. Due to this position, their chest are against each other so they can feel each other’s heartbeat alternately.

From the first stanza, it could be seen that the man goes to the sea in the night before he starts the journey to meet his woman. Then it could be concluded that the poet uses boat for sailing in the sea. By the wish to be together he is willing to paddle the sea and walks far away to meet his love. His desire to reunite appears when he needs to be attached to his love. Because their relationship is forbidden, he should make secret going.

Then, in the second stanza the journey of the poet is still far. He should pass three fields before he arrives in the farm. It shows that for him, distance means nothing as long as he could reunite with his lover. All the sacrifice is paid when he could release all his feeling for her when they are apart.

CONCLUSION

In this study, the writer describes the intrinsic and the extrinsic aspects of Robert Browning's "Meeting at Night". In intrinsic aspects, there are imagery and symbol. There are four imageries are used in the poem. They are visual imagery, kinesthetic imagery, olfactory imagery, and auditory imagery. Meanwhile, there are four symbols in discussion. They are symbols of the gray sea and the long black land, the yellow half-moon, three fields, and lighted match. Then the extrinsic aspects designate the struggle of the character to achieve the erotic love which is shown by his crossing the sea by boat at night, his far away journey, and his secret meeting with his lover. This relation shows that love could only be felt by the one who is falling in love and could not be taken literally by the logic of the common people.

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Appendix

Meeting at Night

The grey sea and the long black land;
And the yellow half-moon large and low;
And the startled little waves that leap
In fiery ringlets from their sleep,
As I gain the cove with pushing prow,
And quench its speed i' the slushy sand.

Then a mile of warm sea-scented beach;
Three fields to cross till a farm appears;
A tap at the pane, the quick sharp scratch
And blue spurt of a lighted match,
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Than the two hearts beating each to each!